

HOOKEDNOW

DAVE SKIP RICK
HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

THANK YOU FOR SUBSCRIBING TO *HOOKEDNOW* the online e-zine for fly fishers. Welcome to the August-September issue. As always our goal is to entertain and educate with a combination of text, photos, and video. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments at: sweltsa@frontier.com (please include "HookedNow" in the subject line for quicker replies). We also hope you will tell your fishing buddies about HookedNow.

The Aug/Sept issue covers those summer insects we all know and love - terrestrials. There's nothing quite like a warm summer afternoon breeze and large trout smashing a grasshopper next to a grassy bank. But don't overlook those subtle takes to beetles and ants as well.

Contents this issue:

Dave Hughes - *Fun with Beetles*

Skip Morris - *Five Hopper Lessons*

Rick Hafele - *Ants for All*



Photo by Rick Hafele

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DAVE HUGHES – FUN WITH BEETLES

Photo by Rick Hafele



I've had a lot of fun with beetles over the many years, some in ways you won't approve. When I first started fishing in the coastal creeks around Astoria, Oregon, where I was born and raised and often wish I still resided, the waters were full of wild trout, the limit was ten, and my parents went after them out of desire to eat them. In our pre-teen apprenticeship years, my brothers and I fished with bamboo rods, level fly lines, 4-foot leaders, and gold single egg hooks beneath a hefty split shot pinched to the leader for weight.

This worked fine, and served as surprisingly good instruction for the nymph fishing that followed many years later in life. But those tiny eggs were parsed out sparingly by my father, and they were also fragile, failed to hold the hook. As a consequence, it was common that I ran out of bait about

halfway through a fishing day. Early on, I'd get together with one of my brothers and whine until he shared a few of his own remaining eggs, and that, too, became early instruction in the important skill of whining when one of your fishing partners has the right fly, and is whacking the trout, while you don't seem to have anything that will work.

Just as my fishing partners today have learned to drift off when they see me coming, my brothers quickly learned that the sight of me thrashing up the stream toward them was a signal that it was time to flee the scene. So I was soon left to my own devices whenever I ran out of bait.

That unbrotherly abandonment is what turned me to beetles.

I was sitting disconsolate on one of those huge mossy rocks that lined the streams in those days--they still do today; I just fished a couple of them last weekend and discovered that all of those rocks, and a pleasantly surprising number of those trout, are still there--when I saw a big, black beetle clumsily navigating its way through the greenery. My egg jar was empty, and my middle brother was disappearing upstream in

the distance, nearly leaving a roostertail in his wake, in his haste to shake me. I captured that beetle by its carapace, turned it upside down, hesitated a moment when it waved its legs imploringly at me, then impaled it on my golden hook.

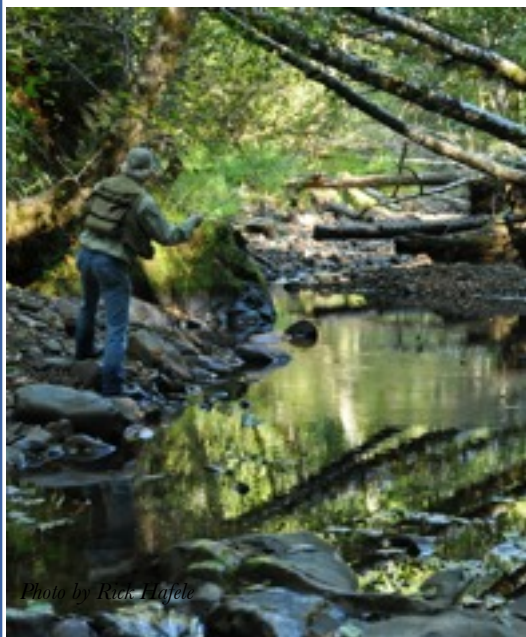
A typical black forest beetle, the kind that falls to streams and gets eaten by trout.

Photo by Dave Hughes



HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Photo by Rick Hafele



A big pool was right at my feet. I didn't even leave my seat in the moss atop that boulder. I lobbed the beetle out, a bit upstream into the current, and let it settle toward the bottom. You know what happened then, and you also know what happened to a minor portion of the streamside beetle population in coming summers. The best part was that my brothers got together and shook their heads at the cessation of my whining. But they, too, ran out of eggs from time to time. Once, when we all three turned out to be on empty together, I taught them my little beetle trick.

I haven't used it in years, and recommend that you use it yourself only as backup when your supply of single eggs fails.

Photo by Rick Hafele

The author on the sort of coastal stream where he first learned to drown an occasional black beetle.

My more recent beetle enjoyments have not been so deleterious to the beetle population. I use flies to imitate them now, but I haven't forgotten that my earliest beetle fishing was subsurface, so I often fish them sunk rather than floating.

That aligns itself perfectly with the first dressing that I used, the Black Crowe Beetle. It was, and still is, a very realistic tie. It's made of deer hair, dyed black, tied in at the hook bend, then drawn forward over deer hair legs, and tied down again at the front, forming a realistic carapace. It's the perfect imitation, but it's so dense that it's difficult to keep afloat. It is my suspicion that this denseness causes it to float, when it will, low and flush in the surface film, making it a more realistic imitation of the natural. But if you can't see it, it's difficult to fish it as a dry fly. So I tend to fish it now only when I desire to fish it as a subsurface fly: almost, as it were, as a nymph. I've been known to slip-knot a little yellow yarn indicator three to four feet up the tippet from it, in part so I can follow its float, if it happens to be floating, and be aware of its approximate location, but also in order to be first to get the news when a trout takes it some scant inches deep.

I've never tried pinching a split shot to my tippet and fishing a beetle imitation deep. That would

Photo by Dave Hughes



The construction of a new generation of beetles is an awkward maneuver that frequently causes the participants to fall off their perches and into the water, where trout have little mercy on them.

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

be reminiscent of some of my earliest fishing, and I don't doubt that it would be effective. I do use the A. P. Black nymph consistently in my small stream trout fishing today, but I've never made the connection between the black-carapaced imitation and those first beetles that I dunked in coastal hill streams.

The most practical beetle dressing I've found is from Skip Morris's book *Tying Foam Flies*. It's simple, a quick tie, floats well, and because of its yellow yarn built-in indicator, it's easy to see on the water. You can tie a bunch of them in a hurry, so there's really no excuse not to have a row or two of them in your fly box, from size 12 to 18. I've found occasional need for beetles larger or smaller, but those at the core will catch trout for you most often.

I needed the larger ones once, on a trip to Chile, and failed to have them, a mistake I won't make again. But it was an honest mistake. I was going to fish the small spring creeks at Estancia del Zorro, out of Coyhaique, and was told to tie a supply of "big foam beetle dressings." So I did; I tied an extra couple dozen of the largest size I used at the time, the size 12. When I got there, guide Holden Hughes--no relation and fortunately not aware of my reputation as a whiner--peered into my open fly box, shook his head in disdain, and handed me a Black Foam Beetle...in size 4. I didn't even have to whine to get it.

But I quickly lost it to a trout. The big fish was rising in a spring creek pool about four feet wide. I crept up behind a clump of bunch grass, stuck my rod tip over the edge, flipped the size 4 beetle to the water. The subsequent detonation caused me to lose my cool. I yanked one way and the trout yanked the other. It was only about a six-pounder, but it still managed to part my tippet and gallop away with Holden's big beetle dressing. He was by then successfully guiding my wife, Masako, far enough upstream that I decided to leave them alone, since they were busy catching similar trout. So I tied on one of my 'big' size 12 beetles, and was able thereafter to entertain some trout between 10 and 12 inches long. I'll never go to Chile again without a supply of truly big beetles: in size 4 and 6.



Photo by Dave Hughes

Guide Holden Hughes with a medium-size trout hooked on a big beetle pattern in the small spring creeks of Estancia del Zorro, in Chilean Patagonia.

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Photo by Masako Tani



Dave playing a fish on the Sylvan Dale pond in Colorado, when the wind was breathless and the surface was still...except for an occasional rising trout.

One of my most entertaining days with beetle dressings was on a tiny farm pond in central Oregon, out in flat wheat country, where the nearest tree in sight is on the slopes of Mt. Hood at binocular range in the long view. The wind gathers its strength on those same distant slopes, huffs across the intervening flatlands gaining speed, and sweeps over the pond so violently that it sometimes

raises whitecaps. My first day of fishing on the trip was ruined by

it.

The second day I remembered some lessons I'd gotten in Ireland, in wind drifting from guided boats. I chose my longest rod, eleven feet, and tied a leader to it the same length. I hiked around the pond until my back was to the wind. Then I let the leader go, before selecting a fly pattern, and it whipped straight out, carried at rod height on the wind. This made me realize that any ordinary dry fly would fly like a kite, in other words float about ten feet above the water, where all but the most acrobatic trout might have some trouble getting to it. My eyes, roving around my fly box, landed on those same size 12 beetles that had failed so well in Chile. Their compact bodies spoke of weight, just what I was after that windy day on the pond.

I tied one on. I let it loose on the driving currents of wind. It towered up into the air, then parachuted down to the surface. By lifting and lowering the rod tip, I was able to make the beetle dance an awkward ballet across the surface. It got interesting when a big nose poked out under it, tried to take it just as it lifted off the surface. I lowered the rod, dropped the beetle back to the surface, and the trout thrashed at it and missed. I lowered the rod again and the trout came and murdered it swiftly. It only weighed about three pounds, and I only caught a dozen or so more in the next couple of hours. No other hatches happened that day; the persistent wind drove them down. I also saw no beetles on the water that day. But whenever I desired a bit of entertainment out of the trout, I'd

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

trot out my awkward ballerina, coax her into dancing over the surface, and she'd draw up some of those detonations for me.

I use beetles on stillwaters more than I do on streams. Once in Colorado, fishing with great guide Chuck Prather out of Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch, beetles saved one of those days that are the opposite of the above windy situation.

The air over the beautiful set of ponds on the ranch was breathless. The Rockies seemed to stand right up next to us, the air was so clear. You could reach out and wrap an arm around their shoulders, like pals. The surface of the pond didn't have a wrinkle on it, but it seemed some midges or terrestrials or something were stuck in it. Every once in awhile something would die in a very small sipping rise, the sort that often speaks of larger trout than you'd think. I had no idea what the trout were taking, and probably had no match for it if I did. But in a problem like that, I know the first answer I always reach for: a size 16 Black Foam Beetle. It didn't let me down.

The only problem was with my patience. Because the rises were so scattered and sporadic, there was not much hope to cover active, feeding fish. It was simply a matter of casting my bread--my beetle!--upon the waters and waiting for something to come and find it. The first time one did, I was gazing up at the mountains when Chuck jabbed me in the ribs and said, "You just missed one!"



Photo by Dave Hughes

Dave's wife Masako playing a beetle-fooled trout under the careful guidance of Chuck Prather, out of Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch in Colorado



Photo by Rick Hafele

After a few more jabs like that, Chuck finally convinced me to pay attention to my fly for more than the first few seconds of its idle float. That turned out to be beneficial; from then on I began hooking trout, and none of them were small. The Rockies receded from my attention, and I was able to focus on that beetle dressing afloat out there on the still surface, because I suddenly had the constant feeling that something was about to pounce it...and something constantly did.

Photo by Dave Hughes

Black Crowe Beetle -
Tied by Dave Hughes

Hook: Fine-wire dry fly, size 12-20.

Thread: Black 8/0.

Body: Black-dyed deer hair

Legs: Black-dyed deer hair



Black Foam Beetle- Tied by Dave Hughes

Hook: Dry fly, size 4-20.

Thread: Black 6/0 or 8/0.

Body: Black closed-cell foam.

Legs: Moose body hair.

Indicator: Yellow yarn or foam.

Dave's newest book, *Pocketguide to Western Hatches*, has just been released by Headwater Books/Stackpole Books. It covers everything from Ameletus to Zebra Nymphs, and covers in just the amount of detail you need all of the important western aquatic insects, terrestrials, crustaceans, baitfish, and leeches that you'll ever need to know how to match: 314 pages, all color, only \$21.95.

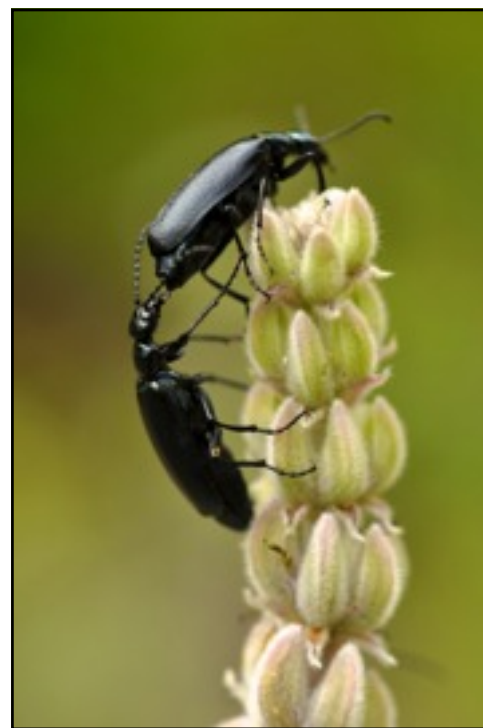


Photo by Rick Hafele

SKIP MORRIS - FIVE HOPPER LESSONS



Photo by Rick Hafele

The two-week fishing trip to Montana was my high school graduation gift and it put me first on the broad banks of the sadly shrunk Bitterroot River in late summer. The river is legally protected now from such abuse, but back then it was no more than a modest creek running between broad sun-baked gravel bars. Still, there were trout. I crept up on a small, lazy pool and put on the only fly that made any sense to me, the Joe's Hopper, a standard grasshopper imitation back then--hoppers had sprung and flown off everywhere as I'd walked through tall grass to the river.

I didn't really know what to do other than to toss the fly out there and let it drift. So I did. Then I waited in real doubt as the quiet current drew the fly unconvincing along a lower edge of the pool. Knowing no better, I kept doing this...until something large swirled on the fly. Minutes later I beached a two-pound brown trout. I stared down at it in amazement--it was huge by my standards back then, my first Montana trout, my first brown, and my first trout of any kind on a hopper fly. In those days, catch-and-release was a novelty. I killed the fish, opened him up, and found a bellyful of grasshoppers.

A week or so later I showed the same fly to the wizened brown trout of the rich Firehole River in Yellowstone Park. A good one seemed to materialize, rising from the depths, followed the fly quietly back for a moment, and then dematerialized back down. The Firehole trout were definitely more cautious and angler-wise than the Bitterroot trout back then.

Since then I've fished hoppers on occasion and sometimes with real success. The primary thing I've learned about such fishing is that it happens at a time when, although the grasshoppers are as happy as a lottery winner, I'm staving off misery--mid to late summer with its scalding, relentless sunshine, the air rubbing like a hot frying pan against my skin. I can take it, but I tend to leave it. My hopper-fishing experience, therefore, is ample simply



Brown trout share their love of hoppers with nearly all species of salmonids. Photo by Carol Morris



Open fields of grass means hoppers and wind, which means hopper patterns and trout! Photos by Rick Hafele

by virtue of many years of fishing trout rivers.

So that's lesson number one: Expect hopper fishing during the hottest time of the season.

Windy days (in mid-to-late summer, of course) up the odds of trout seeking grasshoppers. It's logical: the insects hop and fly with little if any understanding of water, so a gust is likely to stir them to flight and then slap them down where trout live. That's not to say that calm days are hopeless--if there are lots of grasshoppers in the grasses that border a river, enough of them may tumble in to get the trout looking for them. Still, wind should stir your hopes.

That's lesson number two: Wind is best for hopper fishing, but not always required.

A common trap fly fishers stumble into is doing just what they think they should be doing while failing to consider alternatives--that is, they close their minds and their eyes. That's always perilous in fishing. If you stop looking--or, really, stop *seeing*, stop experimenting, stop hypothesizing, your odds of success descend like my Firehole brown. So if conditions are just right for hopper fishing--a hot clear day in July up to early September, grasshoppers everywhere, strong winds--remember that, in fact, the trout may be focused on something else. Perhaps they're chasing down caddis adults back in the shaded water under cut banks and outstretched tree limbs, or waiting for drifting midge pupae, watching the riverbed for mayfly nymphs nervous before their hatching.

Photo by Carol Morris



Lesson number three: Look for grasshopper action, especially when conditions are right for it, but never stop looking for other possibilities, especially when grasshopper flies fail.

To twitch or not to twitch a hopper fly can be a critical decision. Real grasshoppers often do kick around when they wind up trapped on the surface of the water. The trick lies in making the action you put into your fly natural,

convincing...rather than tipping the trout off to your impostor. So I tend to try a dead-drift presentation first. If the trout don't buy it, okay, time to give the fly a few twitches.

When I do twitch a hopper, I focus, trying to make the movement real--watching a real grasshopper on the water is a great help. I also experiment. Sometimes a tiny, occasional twitch will do it; other times, more action is required. A strong wind tends to make grasshopper fishing happen; it also tends to rough up the water your imitation rides, which may be enough to give your fly the life it needs without any action on your part.

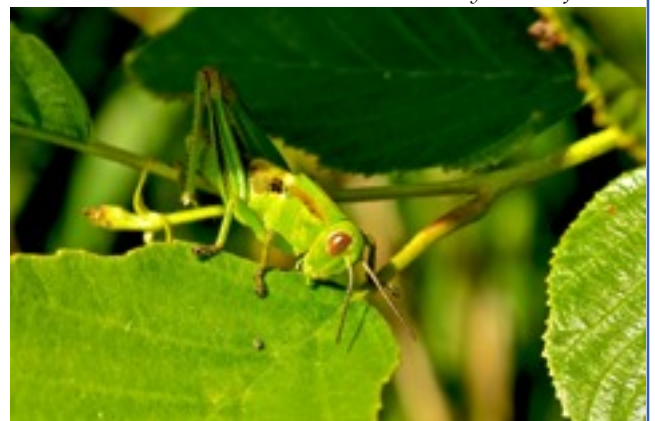
There's always the splat--smacking the fly down harshly, which is about how many hoppers hit the water. Carry this one up your sleeve.

Lesson number four: Try fishing a grasshopper-fly dead drift, but be quick to give it action if dead drift fails. (*Checkout Skips video clip at end of his article showing his casting approach and retrieve for grasshopper patterns.*)

There are big grasshopper-flies, like the Dave's Hopper, which its originator Dave Whitlock often ties on long-shank size-6 hooks, and little grasshopper-flies, such as the Letort Hopper which its originator Ed Shenk ties down to a long-shank size 18. The big ones are, of course, for when grasshoppers are fully grown and anything smaller simply fails to look natural. But early in the season, small grasshoppers may abound.

Of course, as with all fishing, experiment. Perhaps today, with tiny immature grasshoppers all around, the trout will want a big Dave's Hopper more than anything else. They're fish. Go figure.

Photo by Rick Hafele



Small immature hoppers are the norm early in the summer.

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Color varies. Mostly I've seen grasshoppers with yellow bodies. But I've also seen them with tan, cream, and green bodies; I've even heard of orange. Still, it's mainly yellow-bodied grasshopper-flies I carry and fish. Trout will often overlook body color if the fly is correct in size and action. But sometimes...

So here's lesson number five, the final lesson: Try to match the size and color of the grasshoppers you see, but keep an open mind.

HOPPER PATTERNS



Flies tied by
Skip Morris



Shenk's Letort Hopper - Ed Shenk

Hook: Light to heavy wire, 2X or 3X long (I prefer 1X long), sizes 16 to 10.

Body: Yellow 3/0, 6/0, or 8/0. Heavy hair-flaring thread (I use size-A rod thread) for the head and collar.

Wing: A mottled-brown turkey-quill section toughened with artist's fixative or Dave's Flexament.

Head & Collar: Natural tan-gray deer hair, flared, compassed, and trimmed to shape.



[CLICK HERE](#)

Watch Skip describe how to cast and retrieve hopper patterns.

Dave's Hopper - Dave Whitlock

Hook: Standard to heavy wire, 2X or 3X long, sizes 14 to 6.

Thread: yellow 3/0, 6/0, or 8/0. Heavy hair-flaring thread (I use size-A rod thread) for the head and collar.

Tail (optional): Red elk or deer hair.

Butt: Yellow poly yarn, doubled.

Rib: One brown dry-fly hackle, it's fibers trimmed short.

Wing: A mottled-brown turkey-quill section toughened with artist's fixative or Dave's Flexament, over yellow deer hair.

Hopping Legs: Knotted pheasant-tail fibers or trimmed yellow hackles.

Head: Natural tan-gray deer hair, flared, compressed, and trimmed to shape.

Note: Skip's latest book, *Fly Tying Made Clear and Simple II, Advanced Techniques*, offers thorough instructions for tying the Dave's Hopper. His book *The Art of Tying the Dry Fly* will teach you how to tie the Shenk's Letort Hopper.

RICK HAFELE- ANTS FOR ALL



Photo by Dave Hughes

It's not a far fetched idea that ants will take over the world. In fact one could reasonably make the case they already have. While beetles win the "who's got the most species" contest, when it comes to sheer numbers and widespread presence ants win hands - or should I say tarsi - down. E. O. Wilson, the renowned population biologist who has studied ants for 50 plus years describes it well in his new book, *The Super Organism*:

About 6.6 billion individuals compose Homo sapiens, the most social and ecologically successful species in vertebrate history. And the number of ants alive at any given time has been estimated conservatively at 1 million billion to 10 million billion. If this latter estimate is correct, and given that each human weighs on average very roughly 1 or 2 million times as much as a typical ant, then ants and people have (again, very roughly) the same global biomass. (That's a lot of ants!)

Besides occurring nearly everywhere, ants are delicious. If you've never tried them you should (well, I think you should). A quick google search on ant recipes will get you started. For some reason most ants are eaten in countries other than the US. The eggs of some ants are the key ingredient in a Mexican dish called *escamoles*. I've read this sells for as much as \$40 per pound, apparently due to the difficulty of finding the eggs (you also need a lot to make an omelet) and they are available only at certain times. A variety of other ant dishes are served in India and throughout Asia, and Native Americans were also known to eat them.

If you prefer not to eat ants, then you can always eat what eats ants. And one thing that eats ants any chance they get is trout. Trout of all species and sizes love ants. This is not news to most if not all of you, but it bares remembering on those warm summer days when finding a willing trout can be



Ant eggs and pupae - delicious! Photo by Rick Hafele



Carpenter ants are just one of some 14,000 species of ants world wide. Most produce winged adults to spread colonies far and wide. Photo by Rick Hafele

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE



Ants occur everywhere, but streams or lakes surrounded by trees offer some of the best ant fishing opportunities. And remember, ants may be prevalent even if you don't see any. Photo by Rick Hafele

harder than keeping ants out of your kitchen cabinets. And remember unlike the ants in your kitchen, the ants that trout eat often go unseen by anglers, so even though you see no ants floating downstream or along the lake shore, when everything else has failed you might just want to try one of those ant patterns you tied years ago and placed in that hidden fly box compartment.

ant or soldier ant, which keep the colony functioning smoothly. These ants are all wingless and sterile and focus solely on their job. But periodically, usually once a year in the late spring or early summer, the queen produces eggs that hatch into ants for a whole different purpose. These ants sprout wings and are a mix of fertile males and females. They too have a single job: fly from the nest, mate, and start a new colony. If you've seen flights of these winged reproductive ants you know how amazing they can be. Literally tens of thousands, or even millions, take to the air over a fairly short period of time, typically just several days. Few of these ants actually complete their mission of starting new colonies. Most find untimely deaths in the mouths of a wide variety of birds and animals. If there is water nearby thousands may end up floating on the surface unable to escape. If you happen to be a trout when this happens, you throw caution to the wind and begin a feeding binge on ants. Such an event is often called an "ant fall" by fly fishers.

There are times when ants are more obvious. This occurs during those annual events when they sprout wings and take to the air. Most of the year queen ants produce eggs that become some type of worker

Photo by Rick Hafele



A winged carpenter ant like this one can produce some of the best fishing of your life!

Fishing an ant fall can be one of the truly great fishing experiences you can have, and should be on every fly fishers bucket list. Water that seemed devoid of trout, or at

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Photo by Rick Hafele



least large trout, can suddenly appear to be filled with them. And they are stupid easy to catch. I can't forget such an event on a mountain lake a number of years ago. I'd fished this particular lake many times and knew from experience that it held some respectable trout, but I always had to work for them and often left having caught just one or two fish. When I arrived on this day in mid-June nothing seemed different. I didn't see any fish rising, but a light breeze put enough chop on the surface that any subtle rises would go

unnoticed. After rigging up I waddled out in my float tube and began casting a dragonfly nymph in towards some downed logs. After twenty minutes or so without a strike I was debating what to do next, when out of the corner of my eye I caught the flash of a trout near the surface. This got me looking more carefully and it wasn't long before I saw another flash and a swirl that indicated this trout took something off the surface. About then a fat carpenter ant landed on my float tube. If I could have read it's mind I'd say it was quite nervous about its situation - trout infested water all around and only a little island of rubber to sit on for safety.

Well, it wasn't hard to put slashing trout and carpenter ant together and decide I better try an ant pattern. After searching through my fly boxes the best ant pattern I could come up with was a dark brown deer hair caddis that I trimmed to look more ant-like. It was one ugly looking ant, but it didn't matter. After tossing my caddis turned ant out into the surface chop I didn't have to wait long before a serious swirl inhaled the the fly and a gorgeous 15 inch rainbow headed for deep water. This was repeated a ridiculous number of times, until I finally felt silly and my wrist was aching. That night I tied a dozen real ant patterns and the next day drove - more like sped - back to the lake. Once again it was ant city and the fish came like mallards to bread. It was a week before I could return to the lake again. When I did the ants were gone and the trout were back to their normal picky selves.



Trout just can't leave ants alone. Photo by Rick Hafele



Late summer can still mean ants are on the trout's menu. If you see rises and nothing on the water, try fishing a low floating wingless ant pattern. Many times this works even if ants aren't around, and rarely fails if they are. Photo by Rick Hafele

Such is the world of the ant fall - here one day gone the next. And it's next to impossible to predict when these ant falls will happen. To me that's the biggest down side to ant falls; trout can't resist them when they are available, but you can't predict when or where ant falls will occur. Generally ant falls occur sometime in May or June, or depending on elevation and weather conditions maybe July. Later in the year, like August and September, you aren't likely to run into a big fall of winged ants, but by their nature ants are always crawling around and frequently - more frequently than you might think - find themselves in the water. Therefore, on a hot summer afternoon, when trout seem to be asleep and the chance of hooking one on a dry fly seems less likely than landing a tarpon with a 6-weight rod, casting an ant pattern out under some overhanging trees or along an undercut grassy bank, can change everything.

As I found out years ago an exact imitation isn't always needed when trout on to ants. That said it still makes sense to have some decent ant patterns in your arsenal of terrestrial patterns. I've tried many different styles over the years and have basically settled on a foam ant pattern,

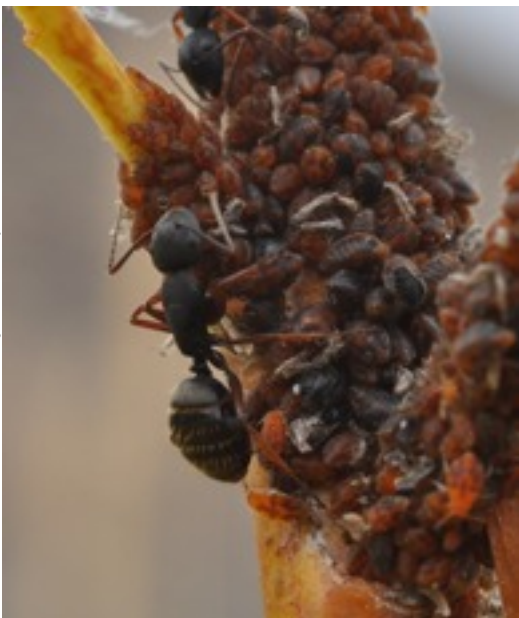


Pay close attention to areas with overhanging trees. Ants may fall in anytime.

both with and without wings to cover flying ants and the more common wingless forms. These patterns float low on the water and sometimes sink just below the surface. That's fine. Real ants do the same thing. It can make it hard to see your fly on the water, however, so if that's causing problems, tie your ant on to a dropper attached to a bigger dry fly, like a grasshopper, for an indicator. This combination can do double duty during the warm summer days. Natural ants come in a wide range of sizes, but a selection of patterns tied in sizes 16, 14, and 12 will cover the vast majority. As for color, burnt orange, red, or black seem most common.

One last thing: ants vs. termites. Termites and ants are often considered similar by a lot of folks, when they are really quite different insects. Ants belong to the order Hymenoptera (bees, wasps, & ants), and termites belong to the order Isoptera (termites only). While different taxonomically, they do share similarities in size, color and general shape. They are also both social insects that live in large colonies and both produce winged individuals that end up on the water at certain times of the year. And like ants, trout seem to love termites when they are available. Because of their overlap in size and color, if you have a good selection of ant patterns you will probably have a pattern that will work if termites are on the water instead of ants. A big difference between ants and termites is that termites are only available to trout in the winged stage, as worker termites remain well hidden inside wood or underground and do not end up in the water.

Photos by Rick Hafele



Termites resemble ants, especially when they produce winged reproductive adults (right photo). But they are actually very different insects. To trout, however, they both mean reckless feeding when available.

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE



A simple foam ant has become my pattern of choice over the years. They can be easily tied in different colors, with or without wings, and in a range of sizes.

Hook: Standard dry fly, sizes 12-18.

Body: Closed-cell foam in color of your choice

Wing: White or pale tan poly yarn

Legs: Light brown hackle

[CLICK HERE](#)

To watch Rick tie the foam ant pattern.

Trout don't grow this fat eating ants, but trout this fat throw caution to the wind when ants are readily available. Photo by Rick Hafele



To find out about Dave, Skip, and Rick's latest publications, where they are speaking, or to book them for your own program, go to their personal websites at:

Skip Morris: <http://www.skip-morris-fly-tying.com/>

Rick Hafele: <http://www.rickhafele.com/RH/Home.html>

Dave Hughes: <http://dave-hughes-fly-fishing.com/>